

**Education Cabinet**

# **National Deaf History Month Celebrates Milestones, Achievements**

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FRANKFORT — National Deaf History Month, March 13 – April 15, recognizes the contributions of deaf and hard of hearing individuals to American society by commemorating milestones in deaf history.

“National Deaf History Month spans parts of two months because it highlights three important events in American deaf history. These defining dates remind us of how far people who are deaf and hard of hearing have come in the last century, and the important contributions of the deaf community to our country,” said Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH).

The three dates commemorated by the national observation include:

- March 13, 1988 – The victory of the “Deaf President Now” movement when students at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. staged a protest demanding the first deaf president for the university;
- April 8, 1864 - The signing of the charter for Gallaudet University by President Abraham Lincoln establishing a college for the deaf; and
- April 15, 1817 - The founding of the first public school for the deaf, American School for the Deaf, by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet.

National Deaf History Month will be marked this year with a program titled “Celebrate Deaf Legacy @ Your Library” on Monday

April 10 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The event encourages libraries throughout the nation to celebrate National Deaf History Month and conduct deaf awareness activities. A highlight of the program will be the introduction of a kit designed to provide information and resources for the nation's libraries across the country for celebrating National Deaf History Month. The Web site of the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action makes the kit available online at <http://www.folda.net/lib/index.html> in the Library hyperlink on the left side.

### **Interesting Facts:**

- American Sign Language (ASL) is a language with its own grammar, structure, vocabulary and syntax. It is primarily used in the United States and Canada. ASL is the fourth most used language in the U.S. Signed English, Manually Coded English and other sign systems have been developed over the years to help deaf students learn English, but these are not languages, but merely codes that use some ASL signs to represent English.
- There are hundreds of sign language dialects in use around the world. Each culture has developed its own form of sign language to be compatible with the language spoken in that country.
- Ninety percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents, which means that they often do not have early exposure to language.
- The term "hearing impaired" is not a politically correct term. Most individuals prefer "deaf" or "hard of hearing" as these terms do not imply brokenness of any kind.
- The field of deafness has become so rich with history and culture that there is a growing field of study called deaf studies. In deaf studies, people learn about deaf history, deaf culture, deaf education, sign language, linguistics and communication, psychology, deaf literature, and the deaf community.

For more information visit

[http://deafness.about.com/od/historicprogress/Historic\\_Progress.htm](http://deafness.about.com/od/historicprogress/Historic_Progress.htm)

If you need more about services for deaf or hard of hearing individuals in Kentucky please contact:

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